

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6010

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

USUN NEW YORK 4026

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 10794

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, GW, KN, KS

SUBJ: COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT: KOREA

REF: CAIRO 10745

1. SOUTH KOREAN CONSUL GENERAL CHANG CALLED ON DCM AUGUST 10 TO REPORT HIS GOVERNMENT'S REACTION TO FONMIN FAHMY'S OFFER TO HAVE GOE MEDIATE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA. ROKG INSTRUCTED CHANG TO BE CAUTIOUS AND MAKE NO COMMITMENTS, ASKED HIS APPRAISAL OF EGYPTIAN MOTIVES AND OBJECTIVES IN MAKING THIS OFFER, NOTED THAT THE DISPARITY IN EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WITH DPRK AND ROK MIGHT RESULT IN UNBALANCED GOE MEDIATION EFFORTS, AND CONCLUDED THAT FOR TIME BEING SOUTH KOREA SHOULD NEITHER REJECT NOR ACCEPT EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL.

2. CHANG HAS SENT IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO SEOUL STRONGLY RECOMMENDING THAT ROK ACCEPT FAHMY'S OFFER FOR FOLLOWING REASONS: (1) SOUTH KOREAN WILLINGNESS ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE WITH NORTH KOREA THROUGH EGYPTIAN GOOD OFFICES WOULD IMPROVE ROK
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IMAGE IN EGYPT AND ELSEWHERE IN ARAB WORLD: (2)

IF SUCH TALKS WERE TO TAKE PLACE, FACT OF ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS WOULD DEFLECT NORTH KOREAN EFFORTS TO PUSH HOSTILE RESOLUTION AT UNGA: (3) SOUTH KOREAN ACCEPTANCE AND NORTH KOREAN REJECTION OF SUCH TALKS WOULD ALSO IMPROVE ROK IMAGE, WHILE REVERSE WOULD BE TRUE IF NORTH KOREA ACCEPTED AND SOUTH KOREA REFUSES: AND (4) ROKG SHOULD BEAR IN MIND LIKELIHOOD THAT FONMIN FAHMY MIGHT "EXPOSE" ANY NEGATIVE ROK REACTION. CHANG SAID HE HOPED HIS MESSAGE WOULD RESULT IN A MORE POSITIVE SOUTH KOREAN REACTION TO FAHMY'S OFFER.

3. DCM NOTED THAT BOTH ROKG AND USG WERE ON RECORD AS FAVORING DIALOGUE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA AND SUGGESTED ON PERSONAL BASIS THAT IT, THEREFORE, SEEMED ADVISABLE FOR SOUTH KOREA TO ACCEPT FAHMY'S OFFER IN PRINCIPLE, BUT MAKE CLEAR THAT DETAILS WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT IN ADVANCE TO AVOID AN UNBALANCED NEGOTIATION. CHANG AGREED ENTHUSIASTICALLY WITH THIS SUGGESTION.

4. COMMENT: CHANG IS TAKING FAHMY'S DISCUSSION WITH HIM AT FACE VALUE AND WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT CHANG ACCURATELY REFLECTED FAHMY'S REMARKS IN HIS REPORT TO THE CORE GROUP MEETING REPORTED IN REFTEL. WE ARE STILL NOT SURE JUST HOW SERIOUS FAHMY WAS IN MAKING HIS MEDIATION OFFER. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS, THEREFORE, THAT BOTH ROKG AND USG TAKE CAUTIOUS POSITION OF AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE. LEAVING DETAILS TO BE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT FAHMY DID NOT MENTION MEDIATION OFFER IN DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR, THOUGH THAT MEETING TOOK PLACE BEFORE FAHMY MET WITH CHANG. WE HAVE THEREFORE NOT BEEN DIRECTLY ADVISED OF THIS REPORTED OFFER.
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